

1-29-1851

# Letter from Anne Whitney, New Orleans, Louisiana, to Sarah Whitney, Boston, Massachusetts, 1851 January 29

Anne Whitney

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*Miss S. W. Sprague*  
*of Sprague, Louk & Co.*  
*Boston*  
*Mass.*



N.C. Jan 7. 29<sup>th</sup> = '81

My dearest Sarah - Yr. letter awaited me at dinner today & the information it contained of continued & improving health was certainly the best thing you cd. send me - I am glad mother can sleep under no more than a comforter & blanket - & be happy - as for me two blankets & a conf. are my ordinary covering here. but the warm weather is surely coming. we have had a few scattering delicious days - such as you never have till summer - & wh. reduce the general character of the weather from total absurdity as sunny south specimens. To day we have <sup>had</sup> a cool strong wind. it has been bright & dusty. a kind of southern March day - There is nothing new to be said or told. not talk about the weather you may be sure - Fredrika Bremer is rolling in the gulf tonight - she intends spending a month in Cuba - & thence goes to St. Augustine Florida - thence north stopping but a few days at intermediate places - to Virginia where she will travel for some weeks - & will arrive in Brooklyn N.Y. the last of May or 1<sup>st</sup> of June! where I may meet her. She considers Mr. Sprague in B. her home in America - & describes Mr. S. as one of the most beautiful of men - I do not know whether I have described Miss B.'s appearance to you - & as it wd. be difficult to convey an idea of her I believe I won't attempt it. Helen & I think her with her prettiest caps or decidedly pretty. ordinarily I suppose she must be called plain - but her intelligence - the impression of youthful feeling you receive from her fresh genius - her loving, benevolent nature with the most exquisite small beautifully shaped white hands in the world, make her



on a prolonged acquaintance - quite fascinating - The other  
evng. Mrs Schmidt (sister) a lawyer of considerable distinction here -  
got to arguing about - the Lord knows what - personal influence  
I believe - & said <sup>have not</sup> that if Lind & Miss Bremer don as much  
for Sweden as Oxenstjerna & Gustavus Vasa? - not being able  
to stem the torrent of his discourse she jumped up, shook  
her hands at him & saying O. O. O. I cannot stay. I shall  
quarrel with you. ran out of the room (really provoked I  
thought - & perhaps to break off an unprofitable argument -  
Her head is nobly shaped - seen without her cap & covered  
with a mixture of brown & grey hair of wh I heard a piece -  
Her eyes are large in sphere - with a good deal of movement -  
joined with a peculiar motion of the eyebrows when she  
talks - You want me to see Jenny Lind - I believe I am  
not so afflicted with the Lindomania as you & the rest of the  
world - The only I shd like to see her - But I shall not  
go down on my knees for the favour - believing that God  
has not made such a vast difference in his creatures that I  
shd seek the acquaintance of one bef. <sup>that of</sup> all the rest of the world -  
Miss Bremer offers to give me a letter wher. saying very kindly  
that she wd. rather introduce me than some other who had  
asked the favour - she has been a good deal annoyed by requests of  
that kind - but I declined - simply because I do not like the  
idea of delivering letters of ~~introduction~~ <sup>introduction</sup> except under peculiar  
circumstances. because one person has a kindness for you it seems  
to me no reason why another's time or consideration shd. be laid  
under contribution - simply I mean if you cannot win your  
own way better not go under the auspices of another - unless  
you are in a foreign land, or have lost all your money - or



have got a black eye. I believe Jenny is to be here about  
the middle of next week - If I see her don't expect me  
to get into such a state of static bewilderment as I am  
when you have heard speak of her - Miss Bremer has  
not dethroned the idol for me - but what she has said  
gravely & with love for her, has made me feel a desire that  
the beautiful illusion wh. veils her may remain - that the  
world may not lose its lovely ideal - Understand that Miss  
B. does not bring any awful charges against her - but it is plain  
that to speak conscientiously of her she cannot flatter <sup>you</sup> with  
the idea that a living Consuelo is among our sisters -

Friday 31. - A cold spell - The good Nordriks thought we  
meant by spell (of weather) that the weather was under a  
spell and thought it an admirable use of the word - The  
Gankers are not so poetical - the language of fiction has  
not got into vulgar use, yet scarcely make her believe that  
we meant nothing more than a time of weather - Truly we  
are under a hyperborean spell now. The fire is made  
in my room & I am up ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> my fingers this morning  
tingled with the cold. But the air is clear & pleasant, this  
is nothing to complain of. Still I own to a growing fancy  
for the south wind, those that breathe of violets. Cold  
weather always seems out of season here - & the high rooms  
& wide windows from floor nearly to ceiling make it doubly  
unwelcome. I am glad that our Swedish friend is in a  
warmer region - I imagine her on the deck of the boat this  
A.M. drinking the rec-tar of the delicious air of Cuba & wait-  
ing the slow movements of the Spanish government to Orseemburg.  
This is the time now to travel in the Mexican country



down the latitudes to Monacan - A. if you could read  
the glorious descriptions of those regions - wh. - occasionally  
come out - if intended to send you papers containing letters  
but they got lost or torn. Our cousin Alex. is a pretty  
boy. not very interesting. Benny & the baby. having occasional  
colds & "beds" are in excellent order. Ben. to be sure  
is pretty snarly. but I think quite needlessly so - as he  
gets & trembles pitied for his bedriddenness. his good mother  
falling into a regular miserere chant every time he  
gets into a passion or crisis. Aunt Ann is well & ill - well  
one day - ill the next. her house is crowded. Yesterday  
I called to see Mrs. Stone. I think I shall have a pleasant  
acquaintance in Mrs. Geddes. a friend of Miss O'Brien's whom  
I think she liked better than any one else here. Her home  
is near Cincinnati - but with her husband & child ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> comes  
here to spend the winter. She is a person of great gentleness  
& much beauty of face. Monday 8<sup>th</sup> - & if  
I don't go to see Mrs. Geddes or somebody else to take off  
the edge or the jag of C. & Am I shall go insane. I have  
come to Aunt's to spend a few days. but as for coming here  
bag & baggage I can't & won't do it. Her house is full & I share  
this room. Helen wants me to come back - & certainly I want to  
go. I arm my soul with patience or a prayer for it - when  
I wake in the A.M. but I constantly feel my weakness. I feel  
as if I shd. go crazy sometimes for somebody to let out to occasionally  
do you want to recall her vividly? "Fortunately we have no ma-  
jor admiration society here as at the north - consequently every in-  
dividual judges independently & correctly" (!) "There is no place like  
a public table to study human nature" - "Close observer as I have been  
all my life" - "Now nothing influences me that is not addressed  
to my reason - I reason upon all things - my credulity cannot be  
wrought upon" I believe at least. I approximate the right method  
of managing her in such cases as these last. But for her opinions  
her magnificent correct judgments - as for ins. "No poet of this  
country has originality but Longfellow" I am sure if I wrote I shd. not  
imitate anybody I shd. have a perfectly original style (I am sure  
you wd.) what is to be done? but I begin to enjoy these - am sure  
that I shall. if I can only talk about them to you. She did not vex  
me in the slightest the day she dined with us. & I listened to some of  
her impudent absurdities with H. B. for we wd. enjoy her together. but taken  
alone she is formidable. The way I take when she talks as above  
& I believe all that people tell me. The other day up at Helen's  
she said. I am one of those who must always be undisturbed



in constant activity of mind & body" - I said well I was born  
lady - am lady from head to foot - this B - looked at me  
as if she understood - & said You are not lady I will answer  
for that. Now I have met of an occasional ballam of that kind  
I get such a miserable opinion of myself when I am with  
it - I am sure that she will see herself or other people  
will see her in a Swedish novel. H. a. understands her  
from beginning to end. I hope she will not forget her -  
Pray don't my dear Sarah make any more investments  
for yr. friends in Mon. & hope it will be money thrown  
away - never send it to Livy with any idea that it  
will soothe her afflictions. There is nothing there adapted  
to that end. Poor Livy! - has she written to you at all?  
Have you had any acknowledgement of the letters we wrote  
her? - I begin to think N. C. weather detestable -  
From cold, raw, windy, dusty we have leaped into  
cloudy, misty, moisty, muddy. The atmosphere owing  
to the general use of soft coal is dirty - absolutely  
you breathe insensible mud, & the Cistern water is  
black here at Annapolis. Up at Hides it is pure & clear  
as our hard water - & delicious to drink. Here we are  
obliged to drink Miss. & as soon wh. purifies improves  
its quality. we drink it mud & all. a glass of it is  
as yellow as amber - The boat accidents of wh. you  
see so many acts, are of the second class boats. very rarely  
they tell me does it happen that the 1<sup>st</sup> class meet with  
them. There is a committee appointed to examine the con-  
dition of every boat on the river - but they are men who  
do not understand the business & just look at the ma-  
chinery & take the Capt's word upon trust, in consequence



the cheap boats make use of old - second hand  
boilers & worn out machinery wh. cause the terrible  
loss of life that the papers record every few weeks -  
I shall come round to Father's ideas soon - I feel  
so like vengeance against these men - hanging wd.  
be too good for them - Murder surely is not com-  
parable to <sup>their crime</sup> ~~it~~ for hideousness - Had I anticipated  
Mrs. Stone's leaving E. C. I shd. have asked you to send  
out some little things for the <sup>SERVANTS</sup> ~~servants~~ got so much  
more cheaply with you - Mrs. Stone tells me that  
in the spring they move into the country - My heart  
aches with envy. Does it not seem strange to you  
that here in S. C. this swampy city - when at Cousin  
Helen's - I have more quiet more beauty & greenness more  
sun & sky & cleanness than at home - & shall we  
ever have this sweetness of life - pure air - greenery  
sight of nature - I must close - Think of me as  
well & waxing fatter every day - Love to Father -  
Mother - Edw. Kate & Susan -

Yrs -

Annie -